

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5301

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN NY

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CINCUSNAVEUR

FOSIF ROTA

COMSIXTHFLT

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TAGS: PBOR PFOR PDEV MR SS MR

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: MAURITANIA ESTABLISHES ADMINISTRATIVE
UNITS

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 0584

SUMMARY: MAURITANIA HAS ANNOUNCED ADMINISTRATIVE
DIVISIONS FOR ITS PORTION OF WESTERN SAHARA. ALTHOUGH
KEY QUESTION OF LOCATION OF FRONTIER BETWEEN MAURITANIA AND
MOROCCO REMAINS UNANSWERED" IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT
MAURITANIA WILL RECEIVE AT LEAST THE MAJOR PORTION
OF TERRITORY BELOW 24TH PARALLEL. END SUMMARY
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1. DURING VISIT TO NOUAKCHOTT MARCH 9-10, MOROCCAN FONMIN LARAKI AND MINISTER OF ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS BENYAKHLEF SIGNED AGREEMENT DEFINING PRINCIPLES FOR COOPERATION IN THEIR FRONTIER REGION. NATIONAL POLITICAL BUREAU (BPN) OF MAURITANIA'S SINGLE PARTY HAS JUST PUBLISHED COMMUNIQUE WHICH SUMMARIZES RESULTS OF ITS LAST MEETING. MAURITANIAN MINISTER FOR INTERNAL SOVEREIGNTY INFORMED BPN THAT MEETING BETWEEN MAURITANIANS AND MOROCCANS RESULTED IN: "(A) SIGNATURE OF AGREEMENT DEFINING GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATION IN TERRITORY ALONG MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN FRONTIER, AND (B) A PROTOCOL WHICH SETTLES THE WAYS AND MEANS OF A COOPERATIVE CULTURAL, SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL, AND ECONOMIC AGREEMENT SIGNED FEBRUARY 10, 1972 BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES."

ZWM GIRM COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MET MARCH 12 AND ADOPTED FOLLOWING DECREE WHICH ESTABLISHED CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS IN MAURITANIAN-CONTROLLED PORTION OF SAHARA. ACCORDING TO GIRM COMMUNIQUE, "DECREE CREATES DISTRICT OF TIRIS EL GHARBIYA AND DEPARTMENT OF LA GUERA. TEXT DEFINES THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH WILL BE FIXED, WHILE AWAITING THE CREATION OF REGIONS, THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TERRITORY REINTEGRATED INTO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA FOLLOWING THE TRIPARTITE ACCORD SIGNED AT MADRID ON NOVEMBER 14, 1975, AND APPROVED BY THE JEMAA. THE DISTRICT OF TIRIS EL GHARBIYA IS A TERRITORIAL DIVISION OF THE STATE. ITS HEADQUARTERS IS DAKHLA. IT CONSISTS OF THE THREE DEPARTMENTS OF DAKHLA, AUSERT, AND AARGUB. WITHIN AUSERT DEPARTMENT ARE TWO DIVISIONS (ARRONDISSEMENTS), TICHLA AND AGHOUEINIT. THE DEPARTMENT OF LA GUERA, IN WHICH IS ESTABLISHED THE ARRONDISSEMENT OF BIR GANDUS, IS ATTACHED TO THE EIGHT REGION (AN EXISTING REGION IN MAURITANIA)."

3. COMMENT: MENTION AND SUBSEQUENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF DECREE ON ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF MAURITANIAN-CONTROLLED PORTION OF SAHARA IS FIRST HAND INFORMATION WE HAVE SEEN ON THIS SUBJECT. IT IS NOW CLEAR FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FIRST TIME THAT AT LEAST MAJOR PORTION OF WESTERN SAHARA SOUTH OF 24TH PARALLEL WILL COME UNDER MAURITANIAN JURISDICTION. ANNOUNCEMENT, COMING AS IT DOES ON HEELS OF LARAKI VISIT TO NOUAKCHOTT, HAS ALMOST CERTAINLY BEEN COORDINATED WITH MOROCCANS. MAJOR OUTSTANDING QUESTION NOW IS: WHERE WILL FRONTIER LINE BE DRAWN BETWEEN MAURITANIAN AND MOROCCO? BOTH BPN AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

COMMUNIQUE CAREFULLY SKIRT THIS IMPORTANT QUESTION.
IT MAY WELL BE THAT MAURITANIA WILL GET NO MORE TERRITORY
THAN THAT COVERED IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE
DIVISIONS LISTED ABOVE. NEVERTHELESS, GIRM CONTINUES TO
SAY IN OFFICIAL STATEMENTS THAT IT INTENDS TO "REINTEGRATE"
ENTIRE WADI DHEHAB.HANDYSIDE

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